

Brokering Campus Community Engagement

JANE HENNIG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTRE WATERLOO REGION



WHY ARE PARTNERSHIPS IMPORTANT? WHAT IS THE UNIQUE ROLE FOR BROKERS

- 170,000 + registered nonprofit and charitable organizations
- Contributes approximately \$151B
- Contribution to GDP Growing faster than overall economic growth
- Employs 2 Million
- 13 Million Volunteers giving 2 Billion Hours

*Imagine Canada 2018

Benefits

- Students are potential employees or long term volunteers
- With quality students, organizations can get more accomplished
- Students can bring ideas and opportunities for change

Challenges

- Over 50% of above organizations are 100% volunteer driven and have limited capacity to support students
- To train and support students takes staff away from supporting clients

HOW WE GOT STARTED



- 2002 –Volunteer Action Centre began building relationships with post-secondaries in response to increasing calls from professors and instructors
- 2005 – supported Wilfrid Laurier University in a funding proposal for the Laurier Centre for Community Service Learning
 - on establishment of LCCSL was on steering committee
- 2008 – joined the Steering Committee for Canadian Alliance for Community Service Learning
- 2011-12 – Involved in the Application and first steering committee for CF:ICE – Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement



A BEST PRACTICE

- Fall 2007 in response to unanticipated uptake from instructors, LCCSL struck a working group to support capacity strengthening for community organizations
- November 2007 working group knew that in order for this to work the 3 major post-secondaries in Waterloo Region needed to be participating
- January 2008, Department heads from all 3 post-secondaries were working together to explore best practices
- Round Table Series

RELATIONSHIPS EVOLVE

2011 Staff concurrent staff changes at all three post-secondaries evolved program direction. At the same time

VAC continues to have strong relationships with all three post-secondaries but as in all things change is the only certainty

- A new student run on campus volunteer centre
- Stronger on going relationships with community partners that place the volunteer centre into a revised role

New directions at Wilfrid Laurier University that you will hear about shortly are moving back to a broader consultative approach

LAURIER'S EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH VAC WATERLOO REGION

Development of the Relationship



VACS ARE **CATALYSTS** FOR CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITY.

LAURIER CSL'S **COLLABORATION** WITH VAC KW MAKES SENSE FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS.

THERE ARE **MISSED OPPORTUNITIES** FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES WHERE COLLABORATION WITH VACS IS NOT OCCURRING, PARTICULARLY COMMUNITIES WITH MULTIPLE POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS.



Development of the Relationship

RELATIONSHIP DATES FROM THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CSL PROGRAM (AND EARLIER) AND WAS A CHANCE TO:

- Broaden and diversify the university's partnerships with community
- Collaborate on the development and use of technology
- Jointly leverage new interest and investment in post-secondary community engagement
- Come together with community organizations on a regular basis with experienced facilitators to help build different kinds of community-university partnerships

How the Partnership Works Today

A DEMAND FOR MORE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

CONNECTING WITH MEMBERS

- Monitoring community capacity
- Uncovering new opportunities for partnership
- Connecting on issues that impact us both

A COMMON GOAL IN EXPOSING STUDENTS TO THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR DURING THEIR TIME AS A STUDENT

- Creating engaged citizens
- Understanding how their skills can be utilized in the non-profit sector

Intentional relationships and opportunities



TYPICAL 2 HOUR/WEEK PLACEMENTS SERVE MANY PARTNERS WELL

- Program-based opportunities

PROJECT-BASED WORK OFFERS A DIFFERENT KIND OF ENGAGEMENT

- Political Science Course in Social Advocacy

EXPANDED DEFINITION AND MORE MODELS ALLOW US TO EXPLORE NEW WAYS OF ENGAGING

- Community Music courses
- Drugs & Behaviour course with 180+ students



Tips and Pointers for Finding CCE Opportunities

WORKING WITH YOUR VAC

- Attend meetings and groups that are sponsored by your VAC and ask that post-secondary institutions are included, if they aren't already.
- Ask your VAC for connections that they might have with the post-secondary institutions.
- Ask your VAC to share post-secondary information on their webpage, in their newsletters, etc.
- Attend community-university events (may need to look in community and campus postings for this info).

Tips and Pointers for Finding CCE Opportunities

LOCATING CONNECTORS AT THE POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

- On the school websites, look for key names/terms e.g. CSL, CEL, WIL, volunteering, community engagement/partnership, student leadership, etc.
- Look for curricular and co-curricular opportunities for partnership e.g. curricular: CSL/CEL courses, programs requirements, etc. ; co-curricular: volunteer fairs, clubs, residence groups, athletics teams, frats, sororities, etc.
- Look for departments and programs that make sense for partnership with your organization e.g. health studies, kinesiology, global studies, history, etc.
- Look for faculty whose courses and research make sense with your organization.
- Don't be afraid to "aim high" e.g. reaching out to department chairs, deans, etc. sometimes yields great results